



Royal Academy of Music.

The prizes and certificates gained by the successful students of this Institution in the past academic year were distributed on Saturday, July 26th, 1890, at St. James's Hall, by Lady Randolph Churchill, who was assisted in her pleasing task by her sister, Mrs. Leslie. There was a large attendance of the parents, relatives, and friends of the pupils. Many members of the professorial staff also were present. Prior to the ceremony the female choir, conducted by the Principal, Dr. A. C. Mackenzie, gave a charming rendering of the motett, "Laudate pueri Dominum" (Mendelssohn), and the trio, "Hosanna to the Son of David" (Sullivan), which was much appreciated by the audience.

Dr. MACKENZIE then said:—Ladies and gentlemen, my present duty is a very simple one. I have merely to initiate the pleasant business which brings us together to-day, that is, the distribution of those customary tokens of our goodwill to the students who have made themselves prominent by the excellence of their work, to bid God speed to those who are about to leave us, and perhaps to encourage those who remain to further and possibly more successful efforts. Before, however, I turn to my young friends behind me, let me say that we have in every respect great reason to congratulate ourselves on the general results of the varied work done by all connected with the Academy during the session which now closes. (Cheers.) Important schemes, nearly touching the claims of our great client the public, and the comfort of our students, and consequently the general welfare of the Institution, have been considered, discussed, attempted, and successfully carried out. The labours of the Committee of Management have been during this past year exceptionally heavy and engrossing, and I think that that body deserves our most sincere thanks. Not only has the numerical strength of the students been maintained, but it is likely to be considerably augmented, and I am in the unhappy position of informing that body that

their labours are likely to increase in a corresponding manner. The Academy, therefore, owes a deep debt of gratitude to the Chairman and the members of the Committee who have devoted so much time, care, and thought to the extension of her boundaries and "the strengthening of her stakes." There are many other friends whose good deeds I should like to mention, but time forbids me to do more than to call your attention to two examples of generosity. The Worshipful Company of Musicians have done me the honour to place upon my shoulders the responsibility of awarding a specially designed and very handsome silver medal to the most distinguished student in the Academy. I admit freely that I have had less difficult tasks to perform in connection with my duties here, but with the assistance of two of my brother professors this has been accomplished. By the words "most distinguished student" you are not to understand the most highly gifted. The emphasis is laid by the donor on the word "student," which means that happy combination of talent—attention, punctuality, good behaviour, and general tractability—which goes far to encourage the weary professor, and assist the management of the school by the sheer force of its good example. Mr. Stanley Hawley has the additional honour of being the very first recipient of this valuable prize. (Cheers.) I am extremely pleased to see that my judgment has not been at fault. He will receive this gift at the hands of the Company himself on a special occasion, not now. It is also a source of great gratification to me to be able to announce two generous gifts to the Academy in the shape of two complete scholarships. In a letter conveying his kind intentions, Mr. R. R. Ross, of Manchester, says: "My main object is to give encouragement to the study of sacred vocal music." He was, however, generous enough to add another complete scholarship to that, which will be competed for by players on wind instruments, and I think he could hardly have chosen a more effective way of promoting the good cause, to use his own words, than the one he has selected. It is indeed a most noble manner of expressing sympathy with the art of music, and one which may, I hope, commend itself to other fortunate possessors of worldly goods. There are many here who have completed their studies in the Academy, and it is naturally chiefly to those that I have to address myself, because they will soon have to face the hard fact that, henceforth,

they are their own professors—that it depends entirely on their capability whether they can continue their studies without the guiding hand of the professor under whom they have been so long. Let me warn those who are disposed to think that the hour of study is over, and who are inclined to rest contented with the knowledge acquired at school, that they are not at all likely to occupy prominent positions in the profession of their choice. Let me also warn those who are disposed to devote their time and energies to one branch alone of musical study of the danger which they run of being left far behind in the race. A learned writer says: “Universal experience has proved that the general scholar, however apparently inferior at the first start, will in the long run beat the special man on his own favourite ground.” And this is perfectly true. It has frequently come under my personal observation that students who have shown aptitude in one particular branch—let me say harmony, for instance—and who have gained perhaps all the possible distinctions which a school afforded, have utterly failed not only to proceed further in that all-important branch, but have actually lost a great deal of knowledge acquired long before leaving school. This is not acting fairly by the Institution, by the professors, or by themselves, and makes any certificate of merit valueless, nay, even misleading. I trust that there are none such present to whom these remarks may be applicable. Let me ask you to consider that your responsibility towards the Academy is even more serious when you have ceased to be students, because you go from us as examples of our training. You, in fact, are representatives of the Institution, and we look to you to help us worthily. On the other hand, you may be sure—and you will believe me when I say it—that we shall rejoice with you in any fortune that may fall to your share; we shall feel honoured in your triumphs and proud of your successes. I trust that all present here may be able to look back on the session which has passed with feelings of self-satisfaction, that none of you may have to regret moments of precious time wasted, advice rejected, or opportunities neglected. It is one of my chief duties in connection with this establishment to see that your work is based on the solid, beautiful pillars which the great architects in music have designed and built up for all generations to love and admire. It is also one of my duties to keep you in touch with all that is good that flows from the pen of the best men of our own time. During the

last nine months I venture to say that a vast quantity of music has been put before you, most of it the work of the great masters, none of it unworthy of your attention as musicians, certainly not unworthy of the programme of a great school. When you in your turn are called upon to form the taste of your own pupils, I hope that your influence will be a healthy and wholesome one, exerted only in favour of that which is absolutely first rate in its own line; and I trust you will absolutely ignore all that is weak and ephemeral and which already occupies far too large a space in the musical catalogues of the day. Above all, do not add to their number. I confess I am always disposed to indulge in a peculiar sigh of relief when the time of examination is over. The anxiety of an upright judge is, I am told, often much greater than the concern of the prisoner at the bar, and I assure you that these trials, where the charges are so many and the judges necessarily so few, are never entered upon without a deep sense of responsibility on the part of the professors who undertake to mete out impartial justice. Let me ask you to consider that these awards are not lightly given, that the struggle for them has been keenly watched, and that the relative merits of the recipients have been carefully weighed and balanced. Let this knowledge enhance their value in the eyes of the successful and temper any very natural feeling of disappointment in the hearts of those who have been unsuccessful. I will now ask Lady Randolph Churchill, who has kindly honoured us with her presence to-day, to distribute the awards.

Her LADYSHIP then distributed the principal prizes, her task being afterwards completed by her sister, Mrs. Leslie. At the conclusion of the ceremony, which lasted a considerable time,

Mr. THOMAS THRELFALL (the Chairman of the Committee of Management) said: It will be immediately my pleasing duty to propose a vote of thanks to the two ladies to whom we are all so much indebted to-day; but before formally doing so I cannot pass without notice the kind reference made by Dr. Mackenzie to the Committee of Management. Speaking on behalf of that Committee, I may say that we are proud of our Principal, and that it will always be a labour of love with us to assist him in the task he has set himself, and in which I believe he will succeed, viz., to make the Royal Academy of Music second to no school of music in the world. (Cheers.) An important step taken by the Committee a few days ago will materially aid him in the accomplishment

of this aim. For the last two years he has borne the burden of a quantity of office detail in no way belonging to the rôle of Principal Professor, and in so doing has been considerably handicapped as to the amount of time he could devote to the special duties of musical supervision. I have been astonished at his capacity for work, and those who were present at our concert yesterday can judge for themselves of the good results he has achieved. The School is too large to be without an Assistant-Master; the Head of it must not have his attention drawn continually away from its proper sphere, and the Committee have accordingly met the difficulty by the selection of an eminent musician, to act under the title of "Curator," as adjutant to the Principal. The name of Mr. Frederic Corder (cheers), a Mendelssohn Scholar, and distinguished by various admirable compositions, is so well-known in musical circles that I need not say one word in justification of our choice. I am confident that under the leadership of Dr. Mackenzie he will render the Academy excellent service. It is important that this position should be made clear, for I understand that some idle, ill-informed, or malicious person has endeavoured to circulate a rumour that the appointment has arisen out of a threatened resignation of Dr. Mackenzie. Such a rumour is obviously calculated to injure the Academy—I trust it was not so designed—but, in any case, the statement is absolutely and entirely untrue. (Applause.) Now let me say a word in acknowledgment of the services rendered to the Academy by the present Board of Directors. They take a most lively interest in its affairs, and on many occasions have given valuable assistance and advice, for which we now tender them our warm and grateful thanks. I congratulate the students on the work of the year, and the excellent *esprit de corps* which pervades the Academy. I trust they will forgive me if, in the spirit of a friend, I also give them a bit of advice. It comes from an amateur, but after all is it not amateurs whom they will have to attract? What I would say to them is this:—"Do not be in too great a hurry to come before the public either as composers or performers. Do not lay any store by the verdict—'not bad for a student'; keep rather in reserve till you can secure an unqualified 'Bravo, first-rate.'" (Cheers.) I look forward to a time when only our very best will be allowed to come forward at our St. James's Hall concerts, and when that will be esteemed an honour as great as the

winning of a medal. I hope I am not unduly trespassing on your patience, but reference must be made to the educational work which is being carried on by the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music in combination. An important addition has just been made to the local examination scheme of the Associated Board, and the opportunities for examination in music which we now offer to schools will, I doubt not, be largely availed of, with the happy result of a gradual but permanent improvement in the standard of musical instruction throughout the kingdom. The singleness of aim, and the spirit of cordial co-operation which distinguish the deliberations of the Associated Board of our two national chartered schools of music are a happy omen for the future of music in this country. We are much indebted to the directors of the Crystal Palace, the Philharmonic Society, Mr. Vert, and Messrs. Chappell for their kindness and liberality in the matter of concert tickets, and the great advantage thus given to our students of hearing the best performances of the best works. I have now the pleasure of inviting you to join me in thanking Lady Randolph Churchill and her sister, Mrs. Leslie, for their kindness in coming amongst us to distribute the medals and prizes to our students. They are both of them skilful amateur musicians, and we are grateful for the interest they have taken in our Institution. I am sure you will carry the vote by acclamation, and signify by your enthusiastic applause your appreciation of the graceful way they have performed their gracious task.

The vote having been enthusiastically passed, the choir sang the National Anthem, and the company dispersed.